

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCTION OF THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION REAL ESTATE LEASING AUTHORITY REVOCATION ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Monday, March 1, 2021

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today, I introduce the Securities and Exchange Commission Real Estate Leasing Authority Revocation Act, which would revoke the real estate leasing authority of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Since the SEC was granted leasing authority in 1990, before I came to Congress, the SEC has consistently stumbled through leasing mistakes at great expense to taxpayers. It is time for Congress to end this fiasco and return the leasing authority to the General Services Administration (GSA), the federal government's real estate arm, like other federal agencies.

When Congress exempted the SEC from GSA regulations and directives in 1990, it expressed its clear intent that "the authority granted to the Commission to lease its own office space directly will be exercised vigorously by the Commission to achieve actual cost savings and to increase the Commission's productivity and efficiency." (H.R. Conf. Rep. 101-924.) Over the past 30 years, none of that has come to fruition.

The SEC did not even establish a Leasing Branch until April 2009, and did not put into place any leasing policies or procedures until August 2010. Before that, in May 2005, the SEC disclosed that it had identified unbudgeted costs of approximately \$48 million attributable to misestimates and omissions of costs associated with the construction of its headquarters near Union Station. In 2007, after moving into its headquarters, the SEC shuffled its employees to different office spaces at a cost of over \$3 million without any cost-benefit analysis or justifiable rationale.

In the summer of 2010, the SEC's Office of Administrative Services (OAS) conducted a deeply flawed and unsound analysis to justify the need for the SEC to lease 900,000 square feet of space at Constitution Center and to commit over \$500 million over 10 years, overestimating the amount of space needed by over 300 percent. In addition to this gross overestimation of space, OAS failed to provide complete and accurate information and prepared a faulty and backdated Justification and Approval after it had already signed the lease.

As a former chair and ranking member of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, I was deeply involved in oversight of the SEC's real estate activities in the District of Columbia after the agency engaged in this improper sole-source procurement of nearly one million square feet of leased space. We held two hearings on this subject in 2011. At the first hearing, titled "The Security and Exchange Commission's \$500 Million Fleecing of

America," SEC Inspector General H. David Kotz testified that employees ignored the SEC chair's explicit instructions and engaged in possible criminal violations in a sole-source procurement. He also supported stripping the SEC of leasing authority if the SEC did not undertake major reforms. I agreed with Inspector General Kotz's evaluation and introduced legislation to revoke the SEC's leasing authority for the first time.

At the second hearing, titled "The Security and Exchange Commission's \$500 Million Fleecing of America: Part Two," SEC Chairwoman Mary L. Schapiro testified that "the SEC recognizes the benefits of having [GSA] manage the Commission's future lease acquisitions. Leasing is not part of the Commission's core mission and we cannot allow it to impede that mission." She then explained that the SEC would pare down its leasing program "solely to liaise with GSA." This arrangement, in which GSA manages SEC leasing activities, was memorialized in a Memorandum of Understanding between GSA and the SEC on August 1, 2011.

Today, I have concerns that the SEC is going back on the commitment it made to Congress, which is why I am reintroducing this bill. In August 2016, GSA and the SEC entered into an Occupancy Agreement to authorize GSA to conduct the process for a new 15-year lease. In December 2016, GSA, with the approval of the SEC, submitted a prospectus to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for approximately 1,274,000 rentable square feet for the SEC. Congress approved this prospectus in 2018, and by July 2019, GSA had received final bids, resolved all protests and even selected a final bidder. A month later, in August 2019, the SEC canceled the Occupancy Agreement with GSA, citing concerns about the value of the purchase option that was part of the lease, concerns the SEC refused to document to Congress. The SEC effectively vetoed the entire procurement process despite not having the authority or funding mechanism to exercise the purchase option without GSA's involvement. After a few more months of impasse, the SEC requested that GSA cancel the procurement and commence a new procurement process.

In all this back and forth between two agencies navigating a convoluted authority structure, a multi-million-dollar procurement funded by taxpayers has gone to waste, adding to the hundreds of millions of dollars the SEC has previously squandered in its real estate endeavors. These public blunders also risk undermining the reputation of GSA and the federal government among developers and building owners that participate in these lease procurements and ultimately driving up the costs of all GSA real estate procurements due to the threat of uncertainty. This also means that the SEC will continue to engage in short-term leases at a premium while the procurement process plays out again, instead of quickly transitioning to a more cost-effective long-term lease as planned. Congress created this con-

fusion by granting the SEC leasing authority, and now Congress must fix it by revoking that authority.

The SEC's mission is to protect investors; maintain fair, orderly, and efficient markets; and facilitate capital formation. GSA's mission is to provide other civilian federal agencies with workspace and furnishings at best value to the taxpayer. As the SEC has demonstrated over three decades, it is incredibly inefficient, wasteful and redundant to have the SEC involved in the nuances of real estate decisions when GSA exists for that very reason. Like other federal agencies, the SEC would continue to have input and involvement in the decision-making process, but the ultimate real estate authority would lie with GSA, where it belongs.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MIKE BOST

OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Monday, March 1, 2021

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I was unavailable to vote in the House on February 17, 2021 and February 26, 2021. Had I been present, I would have voted: Roll Call 41: NAY; Roll Call 42: YEA; Roll Call 43: YEA; Roll Call 44: YEA; Roll Call 45: NAY; Roll Call 46: NAY; Roll Call 47: NAY; Roll Call 48: YEA; and Roll Call 49: NAY.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM KINZINGER

OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Monday, March 1, 2021

Mr. KINZINGER. Madam Speaker, I was unable to be present to cast votes on February 26. Had I been present, I would have voted: NAY on Roll Call No. 45.

HONORING THE LIFE OF HOT SPRINGS RESIDENT MILLIE PATRICK

HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN

OF ARKANSAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Monday, March 1, 2021

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of a true servant of the City of Hot Springs and Arkansas' Fourth Congressional District, Ms. Millie Patrick. She passed away on Friday, February 12, 2021, after years of hard work and sacrifice for her beloved community.

Described by those closest to her as a wonderful friend, Ms. Patrick worked with the Greater Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce

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for over two decades. During this time, she also served as director for Hot Springs Leadership Adult Classes until her retirement in 2020 and as Vice President of Retirement and Relocation.

Born June 28, 1932, in Kansas, Ms. Patrick later made Arkansas home with her husband, Gene Patrick. Together, they had two daughters, three grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews. As a member of Piney Grove United Methodist Church and an avid water-skiier until the age of 86, Ms. Patrick was known to be an active woman. Referred to by her friends and colleagues as a "wonderful soul and a true ambassador for Hot Springs," Ms. Patrick shines as a true example of joyful service.

I take this time today to honor the life of service exemplified by Ms. Millie Patrick. I thank her and her family for their dedication to our fellow citizens and our beloved Fourth District.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 1, 2021

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 45.

IN RECOGNITION OF GERRY ECKENRODE

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 1, 2021

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate Delone Catholic High School Squirettes basketball coach Gerry Eckenrode on his 500th victory as head coach.

Coach Eckenrode began his tenure with Delone's girls' basketball team as head coach during the 1999–2000 season. Under his leadership, Delone Catholic has won four state championships, four district championships, and 14 division titles. His teams have excelled, winning at least 18 games per season. Coach Eckenrode has coached five of the school's 1,000-point scorers. Additionally, he has a robust legacy of mentoring new coaches.

Congratulations to Coach Gerry Eckenrode and the entire Delone Catholic girls' basketball community on this remarkable achievement. As he continues to lead the Delone Catholic Squirettes, I wish Coach Eckenrode and his team all the best.

PEACE CORPS REAUTHORIZATION ACT

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 1, 2021

Mr. GARAMENDI. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to reintroduce the "Peace Corps

Reauthorization Act" on today, the 60th anniversary of the Peace Corps' founding and the start of National Peace Corps Week. I want to thank my fellow Congressional Peace Corps Caucus co-chair Representative GRAVES (R-LA), as well as Representatives MENG (D-NY), RADEWAGEN (R-AS), PHILLIPS (D-MN), CASE (D-HI), and SIREN (D-NJ), for their support as original cosponsors.

Like successive generations of young Americans, my wife Patti and I answered President John F. Kennedy's call and served in the Peace Corps in Ethiopia from 1966 to 1968. This foundational experience inspired our lifetime of service that continued into California state government, the Clinton Administration, and now the United States Congress.

Since the establishment of the Peace Corps in 1961, more than 230,000 American volunteers have served in some 141 countries around the world. Due to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, the Peace Corps was forced to recall all volunteers serving in 65 countries in March 2020. Now more than ever, Congress must support the Peace Corps' mission and realize President Kennedy's vision of generations of young Americans, ready to serve their nation and make the world a better place.

Our "Peace Corps Reauthorization Act" would do just that by providing additional federal resources to better support current and returned volunteers. This bipartisan bill would also provide the funding necessary to redeploy Peace Corps volunteers once it is safe to do so after the COVID-19 pandemic subsides, with the goal of finally reaching 10,000 volunteers serving annually around the world.

This bipartisan bill builds upon the Sam Farr and Nick Castle Peace Corps Reform Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–256) and the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011 (Public Law 112–57) sponsored by former Congressman Ted Poe (R-TX). The bill also builds upon legislation sponsored by former Congressman Sam Farr (D-CA), who served in the Peace Corps in Colombia from 1964 to 1966.

As co-chair of the Congressional Peace Corps Caucus, I continue working in support of the Peace Corps' mission, its volunteers, and the indelible impact their service has on the lives of needy people the world over. Congress last reauthorized the Peace Corps in 1999 (Public Law 106–30), expiring at the end of fiscal year 2003. So, my bipartisan "Peace Corps Reauthorization Act" is long overdue.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to working with the new Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman GREGORY W. MEEKS (D-NY) and Ranking Member MICHAEL MCCAUL (R-TX) to pass the "Peace Corps Reauthorization Act" this Congress. I encourage all members of the House to cosponsor this bipartisan bill.

HONORING WILEY RICKMAN WHITE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 1, 2021

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Wiley Rickman White. Mr. White was born January 14, 1931 in Mounds, Oklahoma. He was the ninth born of 10 children to the union of

Norecker Harrell and Frank Joseph White. Mr. White grew up in a Christian family where Christian values were instilled and reinforced by his parents and their Church.

He attended public schools in Mounds and graduated from Wheatly High School where he played football.

Mr. White was an exceptional athlete at his High School and as a result of his abilities, he earned a football scholarship to attend Jackson State University in Mississippi where he displayed his talent on the field as a member of the JSU Tigers football team for four years as an undergraduate. Later, Mr. White was honored by his Alma Mater by being inducted in the Sports Hall of Fame wherein he was the 35th athlete to be inducted into the Hall of Fame in the University's 103-year existence. As an honoree Mr. White was presented a plaque and a medal.

Mr. White was also a very good student where he maintained a 3.5 grade average and was a Charter Member of The Delta Delta Chapter, Kappa Alpha Psi, Fraternity, Inc. Mr. White completed college and earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree even while his studies were temporarily interrupted to serve his time in the U.S. Military where he moved up in the ranks as Sergeant in the U.S. Army serving in the Korean War. He earned an Honorable Discharge in 1960.

Jackson State University is where Mr. White met the love of his life, Miriam H. Webb. The two married on December 22, 1951 and welcomed two children into the family during the mid-sixties. After finishing college and fulfilling his service obligation the two moved to Los Angeles, California in 1955. There, Mr. White worked at Markham Jr. High School as a physical education instructor. Because of his love for sports and athleticism, Mr. White began officiating high school basketball sporting events. He was later recognized by the IAABO (International Association of Approved Basketball Officials) as the first negro ever elected Secretary Treasurer of the organization. The IAABO is the largest organization of its kind in the world where they have jurisdiction over all high schools, semipro, and small college basketball officials. Mr. White also taught and coached football at Jordan High School in Los Angeles.

Education was very important to Mr. White and he enrolled in The University of Southern California (USC) where he received a master's degree in business administration. Mr. White then expanded his career in teaching and worked as an educator/administrator in the Los Angeles Unified School District for 30 plus years and held positions as a classroom teacher, assistant counselor, assistant registrar, coach, youth service director, student body advisor, and vice principal mainly at the high school level until he officially retired in 1992.

From 1968 through 1969 Wiley and his beautiful wife Miriam, built their dream home in Baldwin Hills, CA and moved their family into the home where they raised their children. The home was the site for many family parties, gatherings, holiday dinners, reunions, rehearsals, and meetings where he hosted numerous Jackson State University Alumni meetings and served as the Alumni's President for the Los Angeles Chapter.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the late Mr. Wiley Rickman White.